



Case History: How to find ancestors in Digitalarkivet (Digital Archives) of Norway

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Objectives:

You will be able to find a person in the following records:

- U.S. 1900 Census
- Emigration Records
- Church Records
- Census Records

Digitalarkivet is the Norwegian National Archives platform for online publications of digitized archival material. The archives encompass both material intended for online publication and material digitized from originals, microfilms, or paper editions.

Digitalarkivet gives you free access to more than 20 million searchable records, several thousand transcribed pages, and more than 17 million scanned pages. There are other online databases for Norway, but this is by far the one most used. See website below:

<http://arkivverket.no/eng/digitalarkivet>

In this class you will learn how to use this site by undertaking a case study of Guri Holten. When she came to Michigan her maiden name was Hommelstad, and her family stated that she came from Norway to Leelanau, Michigan around year 1880.

- We will first find her in the 1900 U.S. Census for Michigan to determine her year of emigration.
Then we will search for her in the emigration records from Norway which should list the name of the parish she came from in Norway.
- Then we will learn how to find the name of the county where her parish is located by using tools in the FamilySearch wiki.

<https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway>

With the name of the county we will be able to choose the county from the drop down list, then find the parish in the scanned parish records for Norway.

- We will search the parish records of Norway and find her in her scanned birth and christening record.
- Last we will find her in the census records for Norway.

Digitalarkivet of Norway has recently made some major changes to some of their databases and here you will learn different ways to search in the changed databases.

You will learn two ways to search in the emigration records which usually list the parish where a person came from in Norway, but they do not list the county where a parish is located.

In order to search the church records you must first know in which county a parish is located. Therefore, you will get a short demonstration on how to find a given parish and the name of the county where it is located by using the FamilySearch wiki page for Norway. You will learn that in Norway there are *clerical districts* and parishes. There may be one or more parishes in a *clerical district*, and the name of a *parish* may be the same name as the *clerical district*. You will learn how to differentiate between the two. Go to the link below and follow the instructions.

<https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Norway>

From the main page, scroll down until you see “Research Tools,” then look below for a box. In the first column in the box, second item you will see “Parish List.” Choose “Parish List” and a new screen will appear.

Do not choose the first bullet, which is “Regions” which will list all the regions in Norway in alphabetical order followed by the county, then the clerical districts that belong to a given region.

Do not choose the second bullet which is “Clerical District.” It will list the name of all the clerical districts in alphabetical order, followed by the county where it is located.

The third, fourth, fifth, and sixth bullets list all the parishes in Norway in alphabetical order. Because of the number of parishes in Norway it was best to divide the parishes into four parts. You will see “Parish List Norway A-H,” then “Parish List Norway I-R,” then “Parish List Norway S-T,” and last “Parish List Norway U-Å.”

Choose “Parish List Norway S-T,” as you are looking for the parish “Surnadal.” Find “Surnadal,” and notice in the column to the right the name of the “Clerical District” is listed. Then in the third column you will find the name of the county where “Surnadal” is located. In this case the county is *Møre og Romsdal* and you are now ready to search in the *Church records*.

Now go back to the Digitalarkivet main page: <http://arkivverket.no/eng/digitalarkivet>

Choose “Digitized Parish Registers,” and a new screen will appear. Here you will select a county by clicking on the down arrow and a list of all the counties in Norway will appear. Here you will choose the county “Møre og Romsdal” and notice that a new screen with all the parishes in this county will appear in alphabetical order. Now choose the parish of Surnadal (in this case Surnadal is the name of both the parish and clerical district). Choose *the range of years Surnadal: 1852-1863 (official)*, then in the next screen, choose *Birth and baptism records for the year 1859* and then choose “next” (you will move through the pages until you find her name in the birth entries). You may want to search for her in the confirmation records as well.

Last, you will learn how to find her with her family in the 1865 Census for Surnadal. You will learn two different ways in how search in the census records.

This is not the only way to find an ancestor in *Digitalarkivet* of Norway. You may want to practice on your own by going to the main page and use the box at the top left of the main page. Here you may enter a name in the box under “Search the Sources” and if the name is not *common* you *may* be able to identify your ancestor in several records. You may want to experiment with *advanced search for individuals* as well.

This concludes our search for Guri Hommelstad Holten’s place of origin in Norway.